

# Module 1: Overview of Licensing

## ***Licensing Pre-Service Curriculum***



# Trainer Guide

## Office of Child Welfare

**12/1/2019**

## Module 1:

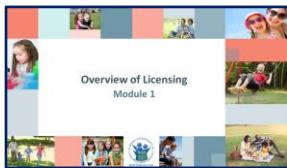
### Overview of Licensing

#### Time:

4-5 Hours

#### Module Overview:

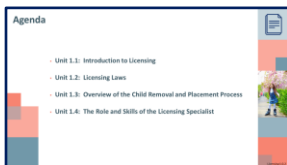
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This module provides an overview of the purpose and goals of foster care licensing and the role of the Licensing Specialist. As this module serves as a foundation for the licensing course, we will cover many of these elements in greater detail in upcoming modules.

#### Agenda:

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**Unit 1.1:** Introduction to Licensing (TG: 3, PG: 2)

**Unit 1.2:** Licensing Laws (TG: 34, PG: 19)

**Unit 1.3:** Overview of the Child Removal and Placement Process (TG: 38, PG: 23)

**Unit 1.4:** The Roles and Skills of the Licensing Specialist (TG: 38, PG: 26)

#### Materials:

- Trainer's Guide (TG)
- Participant's Guide (PG)
- PowerPoint slide deck
- Flip chart paper and markers
- Videos:
  - Quality Parenting for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, which can be found on the QPI Florida website at:  
<http://centervideo.forest.usf.edu/qpi/aboutqpi/overview.html>
  - Voices of Youth  
<http://centervideo.forest.usf.edu/dcf/voicesofyouth/fs.html>

#### Module References:

Trainer should have printed copies or access to the following references/resources to use while presenting this module:

- Chapter 39, F.S.
- Section 409.175, F.S.
- Section 409.145, F.S., Care of Children, Quality Parenting and Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard

**Activities:**

- Chapter 65C-45, F.A.C.
- DCF Operating Procedures
  - CFOP 170-11, Chapter 12
- All legal references are available on Florida's Center for Child Welfare website under the policies tab:  
<http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/index.shtml#>

*Due to small size of most licensing classes, all activities should be completed individually or as a whole group.*

**Unit 1.1:**

**Activity A:** My Journey to Foster Care Licensing (TG: 4, PG: 3)

**Activity B:** Seven Professional Practices for Licensing (TG: 7, PG: 4)

**Activity C:** Developing as a Licensing Specialist (TG: 17, PG: 10)

**Activity D:** My Strengths and Needs (TG: 20, PG: 12)

**Activity E:** The Big Picture (TG: 23, PG: 16)

**Unit 1.2:**

No activities

**Unit 1.3:**

No activities

**Unit 1.4:**

**Activity F:** Engagement Skills Practice (TG: 52, PG: 33)

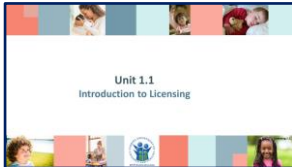
**Trainer Note:** Due to ongoing changes to licensing laws and policies, each trainer is expected to consult all legal and policy references in this curriculum with the most current information posted on the Center for Child Welfare website: <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/> It is the trainer's responsibility to maintain accurate information as published curriculum may not reflect current changes.

**9/1/2019 Trainer Note:** CFOP 170-11, Chapter 16 is in the process of being replaced by Chapter 65C-45, F.A.C.

## Unit 1.1: Introduction to Licensing

### Unit Overview:

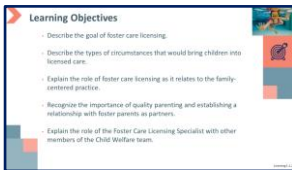
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The purpose of this unit is to provide an overview of the role of foster care licensing in child protection, the importance of understanding the children we serve, and partnership expectations supported by Florida's Child Welfare Practice Model.

### Learning Objectives:

Slide: 1.1.2



PG: 2

1. Describe the goal of foster care licensing.
2. Describe the types of circumstances that would bring children into licensed care.
3. Explain the role of foster care licensing as it relates to the family-centered practice.
4. Recognize the importance of quality parenting and establishing a relationship with foster parents as partners.
5. Explain the role of the Foster Care Licensing Specialist with other members of the Child Welfare team.

**Trainer Note:** Start the class with a brief icebreaker for participants to have an opportunity to learn about each other and why they are pursuing a career in foster care.

## Activity A: My Journey to Foster Care Licensing

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Purpose:** To allow participants the opportunity to get acquainted and personally connect with their journey to becoming Foster Care Licensing Professionals.

**Materials:** *Slide: 1.1.3*

- **PG: 3, My Journey to Foster Care Licensing worksheet**

**Trainer Note:**

- Express that this activity provides an opportunity to not just understand one another, but to also connect with foster parents.
- Emphasize that everyone brings with them their own motivation to do this work, which mirrors the diverse motivations that inspire foster parents.
- Each person has the capacity to make a difference in the lives of children and their families. Licensing Specialists and foster parents both have this opportunity.

**Trainer Instructions:**

- Break participants into pairs.
- Using the worksheet have participants interview each other to discover:
  - Their partner's educational major and the college they attended.
  - The city their partner grew up in and at least two things they appreciate about it.
  - Why their partner chose to work in foster care licensing.
  - Their partner's professional goals for the next five years.

<b>Participant Instructions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>After ten minutes, explain that each participant will provide a 60 second introduction of their partner without reading from their paper.</i></li></ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Interview your partner to discover:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Your partner's educational major and the college they attended.</li><li>• The city your partner grew up in and at least two things they appreciate about it.</li><li>• Why your partner chose to work in foster care licensing.</li><li>• Your partner's professional goals for the next five years.</li></ul></li><li>2. After ten minutes, provide a 60-second introduction of your partner without reading from your paper.</li></ol>
<b>Activity STOP</b>	

## Child Welfare Practice Model - Seven Professional Practices

**Trainer Note:** Explain that the purpose of Unit 1 is to provide an overview of the role of foster care licensing in child protection, the importance of understanding the children we serve, and partnership expectations supported by Florida's Child Welfare Practice Model.

Slide: 1.1.4



**PG: 4-5**  
**(write on a chart)**

Everything the system does as a whole revolves around the safety, well-being, and permanency of children. The goal is to provide high quality family-centered practice that allows for both children's safety and normalcy.

**From what we learned during CORE, can you tell me the seven professional practices of the Child Welfare Practice Model?**

**Endorse:**

1. Engaging the family
2. Partnering with all involved
3. Information-gathering
4. Assessing and understanding information
5. Planning for child safety
6. Planning for family change
7. Monitoring and adapting Case Plans

## Activity B: Seven Professional Practices for Licensing

**Time:**

20 minutes

**Purpose:**

To allow participants the opportunity to brainstorm how Licensing Specialists contribute to the seven professional practices of the Child Welfare Practice Model.

**Materials:**

Slide: 1.1.5

- **PG: 4-5, Seven Professional Practices for Licensing worksheet**
- Flip chart paper and markers

**Trainer Note:** Use this activity as a way to integrate the Licensing Specialist into the Child Welfare team and ensure participants realize how important they are on the team.

**Trainer Instructions:**

**Option 1:** If a sizeable group, assign one or two of the professional practices to small groups and have them discuss and record their responses.

**Option 2:** If a small group, conduct the activity as a large group. Brainstorm and record group responses on a flip chart.

- One at a time, select the seven professional practices and pose the following question:

**How are Licensing Specialists involved in these seven professional practices?**

1. Engaging the family
2. Partnering with all involved
3. Information-gathering
4. Assessing and understanding information
5. Planning for child safety
6. Planning for family change
7. Monitoring and adapting Case Plans

- After participants respond to each question, use the answers below to support processing the activity.



- **Debrief:** Emphasize the important role that Licensing Specialists play in the system of care.

### Trainer Version

#### **Engaging the family**

##### **Endorse:**

- Build relationships with foster families
- Support partnership and co-parenting between foster families and birth families
- Provide ongoing support to foster families

#### **Partnering with all involved**

##### **Endorse:**

- Coordinate opportunities for collaboration
- Maintain communication with all partners that interact with the foster family
- Assist and support placement staff when making placement decisions
- Work with others to ensure transitions minimize trauma
- Engage all partners in recruitment and retention

#### **Information-gathering**

##### **Endorse:**

- Gather information from foster families regarding children in their care
- Collect family history and personal information during the home study process
- Contact multiple sources for information on prospective parents
- Seek information that foster families request on needs of each child

#### **Assessing and Understanding Information**

##### **Endorse:**

- Reconcile all information gathered during the home study
- Assess the capacity of all prospective families
- Assess the foster family's strengths and needs
- Work collaboratively to make changes with other partners based on information gathered

#### **Planning for child safety**

##### **Endorse:**

- During home visits and phone calls with foster parents, be aware of any safety concerns
- Notify other partners when safety concerns are apparent
- Ensure that foster parents have received adequate training on behavior management and trauma

**Planning for family change****Endorse:**

- Support foster families in obtaining Case Plan information
- Keep foster parents up-to-date on how the birth family is progressing on the Case Plan
- Support foster parents in identifying how to give input on the Case Plan

**Monitoring and adapting Case Plans****Endorse:**

- Support foster families obtaining revised Case Plans
- Ensure foster parents are aware of Case Plan changes that may impact the children in their care

**Participant Instructions:**

1. As a group, using your assigned professional practice, answer the following question:

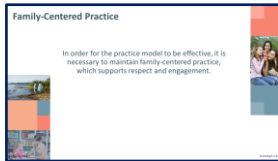
***How are Licensing Specialists  
involved in these seven professional practices?***

2. Be prepared to discuss with the class.

**Activity STOP**

## Family-Centered Practice

Slide: 1.1.6



In order for the practice model to be effective, it is necessary to maintain family-centered practice, which supports respect and engagement.

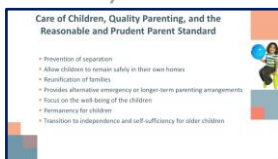
### ***What does family-centered practice mean in the context of foster care licensing?***

#### ***Endorse definitions that include, but are not limited to:***

- Collaboration between birth family (or family of origin) and foster parents (all removals are not from a birth family or parent) in the foster care process is critical. The birth family is the center of everything. Point out how this view is a direct extension of family-centered practice.
- Family-centered practice explains the importance of collaboration and participation between foster parents and the birth family or family of origin.

### ***How will you demonstrate family-centered practice as a Licensing Specialist?***

Slide: 1.1.7



**PG: 6**

The seven professional practices and family-centered practice provide a frame for work in Child Welfare.

Looking at licensing and out-of-home care for children, the following statutory goals (s. 409.145, F.S.) focus on the Care of Children, Quality Parenting, and the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard.

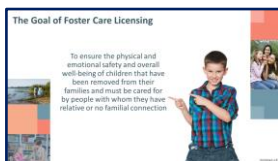
- Prevention of separation of children from their families
- Intervention to allow children to remain safely in their own homes
- Reunification of families who have had children removed from their care

- d. Safety for children who are separated from their families by providing alternative emergency or longer-term parenting arrangements
- e. Well-being of children through emphasis on maintaining educational stability and providing timely health care
- f. Permanency for children for whom reunification with their families is not possible or is not in the best interest of the child
- g. The transition to independence and self-sufficiency for older children who remain in foster care through adolescence

These goals ultimately drive the objective of foster care licensing and focus on the level of quality expected from professionals and caregivers.

## The Goal of Foster Care Licensing

Slide: 1.1.8



PG: 7

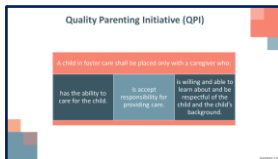
The goal of foster home licensure is to ensure the physical and emotional safety and overall well-being of children who have been removed from their families and must be cared for by people with whom they have relative or no familial connection.

The state has, in effect, become the child's parent and is responsible for his/her well-being while the child is in the state's care.

In order to ensure quality parenting, Florida has established quality parenting expectations.

## Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI)

Slide: 1.1.9-1.1.10



PG: 7

A child in foster care shall be placed only with a caregiver who:

- has the ability to care for the child.
- is willing to accept responsibility for providing care.
- is willing and able to learn about and be respectful of the child's culture, religion and ethnicity, special physical or psychological needs, any circumstances unique to the child, and family relationships.

The Department, the community-based care lead agency (CBCs), and other agencies shall provide such caregiver with all available information necessary to assist the caregiver in determining whether he/she is able to appropriately care for a particular child.

Slide: 1.1.11



The Quality Parenting Initiative (QPI) operationalizes the quality parenting expectations and is one of Florida's approaches to strengthening foster care.

The Quality Parenting Initiative was designed by the Youth Law Center and Eckerd Foundation in partnership with the Department of Children and Families and local CBCs.

The core premise is that the primary goal of the Child Welfare System is to ensure that children have effective, loving parenting. The best way to achieve this goal is to enable the child's own parents to care for him/her. If that isn't possible, the system must ensure that the foster or relative family caring for the child provides the loving, committed, skilled care that the child needs, while working effectively with the system to reach the child's long-term goals.

Given such an important role, isn't it only logical that foster parents need to be treated as professional parents? To have the knowledge and skills to be effective in their role? To be selected and assessed based on their ability to perform their role? To be involved throughout the entire process including the dependency process, Case Planning, and judiciary meetings?

## Show Time – Video Review (7 minutes)

Slide: 1.1.12



**About the Quality Parenting Initiative & Being a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Foster Parent**

<http://centervideo.forest.usf.edu/qpi/aboutqpi/overview.html>

- What are your overall impressions of the video?
- What message does the video convey about foster parents/professionals, and partners?

Licensing 1.1.12

**PG: 8**

**Trainer Note:** Prior to viewing, tell participants that the following video on Quality Parenting was recorded at a Florida conference and serves as an introduction to how important quality parents are for children.

Tell participants to pay attention to the messages the video conveys about foster parents, professionals, and partners.

**View About the Quality Parenting Initiative & Being a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Foster Parent, which can be found on the QPI Florida website at:**

<http://centervideo.forest.usf.edu/qpi/aboutqpi/overview.html>

Process the video by discussing the following questions:

- **What are your overall impressions of the video?**
- **What messages does the video convey about foster parents, professionals, and partners?**

Slide: 1.1.13



PG: 8

It is important that all caregivers and professionals understand and support the Four Key Components of QPI:

1. Respected Partners
2. Nurturing Children
3. Supporting Families
4. Strengthening Communities

### ***What does nurturing children mean?***

#### ***Endorse:***

- Get to know each child
- Recognize each child's strengths and needs
- Maintain connections as much as possible
- Ensure that children engage in normal activities
- Support each child

### ***What does supporting families mean?***

#### ***Endorse:***

- Recognize each family's strengths and needs
- Provide opportunities for families to make decisions
- Provide opportunities for professional growth
- Offer continuous support
- Communicate openly

### ***What does strengthening communities mean?***

#### ***Endorse:***

- Involve the entire community in supporting families
- Strong families make strong communities
- Community members from all walks of life are engaged
- All of the systems that support families become more informed

## Licensing Specialists – Seven Primary Roles

**Trainer Note:** Instruct participants to turn to **PG: 9, Licensing Specialists – Seven Primary Roles** and use it to cover this section of the course.

Slide: 1.1.14



**PG: 9**

The Licensing Specialist is in the unique position to incorporate the seven professional practices, family-centered practice, and quality parenting in the daily working of serving foster families and children in their care.

In looking at the seven professional practices, it is easy to see how each of these practices fits within the roles of the Licensing Specialist. In order for Licensing Specialists to do their job effectively, they need to build the skills and knowledge to wear many hats. Licensing Specialists have seven primary roles that include:

1. **The Partner (Professional Practice - Partnering with all involved, planning for family change):** The Licensing Specialist is responsible for partnering with many professionals, foster parents, and the children in their care.
2. **The Regulator (Professional Practice - Planning for child safety):** The Licensing Specialist must ensure that safety provisions are intact, policies are followed, and critical goals are embraced by foster parents.
3. **The Assessor (Professional Practice - Information gathering, assessing and understanding information):** The Licensing Specialist is responsible for the initial licensing, on-going assessment, and continued licensing of foster parents.
4. **The Mentor (Professional Practice - Engaging the family):** The Licensing Specialist must build relationships with foster parents. They must be the teacher, coach, and advocate for foster parents. They must be able to identify concerns and determine the best course of action for foster parents so that they may grow and stretch themselves.



5. **The Record Keeper (Professional Practice - Monitoring and adapting to Case Plans):** The Licensing Specialist is responsible for documenting all interactions and observations with foster parents and children. They must enter information in the official statewide automated system and other required record keeping practices and be able to locate case information for themselves and for the foster parents.
6. **The Communicator (Professional Practice - Monitoring and adapting to Case Plans):** The Licensing Specialist is responsible for recruiting, licensing, and retaining foster parents, maintaining customer service, managing conflicts, and advocating for foster parents and the children in their care. The Licensing Specialist is also responsible for communicating with partners and actively supporting placement stability. They are the bridge between the foster parents and the other partners in the system.
7. **The Match-Maker (Professional Practice - Planning for family change):** A Licensing Specialist may match or work in conjunction with other partners when a child is in need of a placement. They must also develop and maintain a precise family profile for each foster home. It is also their job to remind foster parents to stay within their profile but work on expanding their profile by showing them their strengths and expanding their view of children they are willing to accept.

**Trainer Note:** Use Activity C as a bridge to help participants understand what they will be learning during this course and how it applies to their roles as a Licensing Specialist.

## Activity C: Developing as a Licensing Specialist

<b>Time:</b>	20 minutes
<b>Purpose:</b>	To allow participants the opportunity to brainstorm qualities, skills, and knowledge someone needs to successfully perform the roles of a Licensing Specialist.
<b>Materials:</b> <i>Slide: 1.1.15</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Flip chart paper and markers</i></li> <li>• <b>PG: 10-11, Developing as a Licensing Specialist worksheet</b></li> </ul>
<b>Trainer Instructions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>One at a time, select the roles of a Licensing Specialist and pose the questions below. Record responses on a flip chart.</i></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>What are the qualities, skills, and knowledge a Licensing Specialist needs to successfully perform each role?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>For example, to be an excellent assessor, a Licensing Specialist must be able to conduct in-depth interviews, be able to see below the surface, be persistent, etc.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Participant Instructions:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identify the qualities, skills, and knowledge a Licensing Specialist needs to successfully perform each role.</li> </ol>

### Trainer Version

*Use answers below to support processing the activity and discuss the commonalities and possible contradictions involved in each of these roles.*

Answers include, but are not limited to:

#### **The Partner**

- Is able to work collaboratively with other professionals.
- Is able to work collaboratively with foster parents.
- Is able to work with children, youth, and birth parents.
- Understands the common needs, mission, and outcomes.
- Understands his/her own roles within the partnership.
- Is able and willing to build off the skills, strengths, and resources of other partners.
- Respects and values the contributions, strengths, and skills of other partners.
- Effectively communicates and is willing to keep the lines of communication open.

#### **The Regulator**

- Knows and applies the state and local policies regarding licensing and relicensing homes.
- Ensures foster parents meet all required documentation and other minimum licensing standards.
- Assists in investigations in case of an institutional allegation against foster home.

#### **The Assessor**

- Understands the licensing requirements and process.
- Understands the role of the foster parent, the qualities needed for successful fostering, and the challenges foster parents face.
- Demonstrates rapport building skills.
- Applies active listening skills.
- Installs effective interviewing skills.
- Applies challenging skills.
- Possesses cultural competence.

#### **The Mentor**

- Has skills in building and maintaining relationships and empathy with foster parents.
- Has skills in nurturing families.
- Has skills in empowering families.
- Has skills in identifying strengths and needs.

- Understands where/how needs can be met.
- Understands child development.
- Understands trauma-sensitive care.
- Has the ability to be flexible.
- Demonstrates patience.

**The Record Keeper**

- Possesses effective note-taking skills.
- Is prompt.
- Is thorough.
- Has technology skills.
- Meets deadlines.
- Understands the legalities of documentation.

**The Communicator**

- Possesses active listening skills.
- Demonstrates effective customer service skills.
- Has effective rapport building skills.
- Applies mediation skills.
- Utilizes verbal, non-verbal, and contextual family engagement techniques.
- Applies effective conflict management skills.
- Understands how to avoid triangulation.
- Effectively establishes boundaries.
- Demonstrates advocacy skills.
- Understands the rules of confidentiality.
- Understands that documentation is legal.

**The Match-Maker**

- Completes an accurate family profile.
- Assists families stay within their profile.
- Communicates to the family their strengths, so they can help them expand their profile.
- Expands a foster parent's view of children, so they can help them expand their profile.

**Activity STOP**

**Trainer Note:** Make the following key points as you transition to the next activity:

- Some of the roles may be familiar and others will develop with experience.
- Child Welfare Professionals need to engage in regular self-assessment to ensure they are prepared to make important decisions that impact the lives of others, especially children.
- The next activity provides an opportunity to begin that self-assessment.

## Activity D: My Strengths and Needs

**Time:**

15 minutes

**Purpose:**

To allow participants to self-assess their strengths and needs based on each role they will be playing.

**Materials:**

Slide: 1.1.16

- **PG: 12-13, My Strengths and Needs worksheet**

**Trainer Note:** This activity can be used not only to allow participants the opportunity to look at their own strengths and needs but can also be used as a bridge to begin discussing the important role of identifying and helping foster families identify their strengths and needs.

**Trainer Instructions:**

- Ask participants to answer the following two questions on their worksheets:

**Given each role that a Licensing Specialist plays, what are your personal strengths and needs?**

- The Partner
- The Regulator
- The Assessor
- The Mentor
- The Record Keeper
- The Communicator
- The Match-Maker

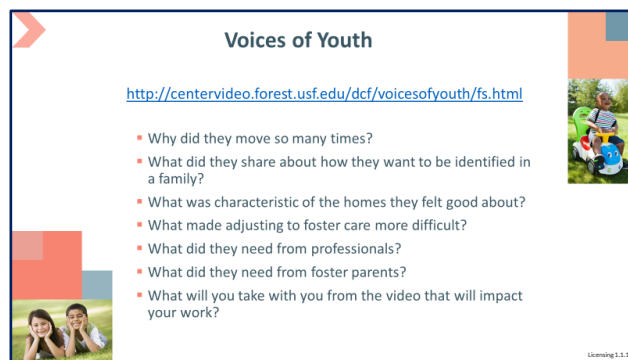
	<p><b>What are some ways you can turn your needs into strengths?</b></p> <p>Suggested responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Supervision and coaching</li> <li>- Experience in the job</li> <li>- Learning the laws, policies, and procedures</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solicit feedback from the group on their responses. If participants struggle with the second question, assist them by sharing the suggested responses.</li> <li>• Debrief: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reinforce that we all have strengths and needs.</li> <li>- Children we work with will have strengths and needs.</li> <li>- Foster parents have strengths and needs.</li> <li>- Other partners have strengths and needs.</li> <li>- Even systems have strengths and needs.</li> <li>- Remembering this will assist in building supportive relationships regardless of the inherent challenges in working with so many people.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Participant Instructions:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Working independently, complete the worksheet by answering the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Given each role that a Licensing Specialist plays, what are your personal strengths and needs?</li> <li>• What are some ways you can turn your needs into strengths?</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Debrief with the group.</li> </ol>
<b>Activity STOP</b>	

Although the roles, strengths, and needs of the Licensing Specialist may be different from others on the team, there is one common focus that everyone should have: the child.

It is everyone's role to ensure that children are safe and experience permanency and well-being.

## Show Time – Video Review (18 minutes)

Slide: 1.1.17



**Voices of Youth**

<http://centervideo.forest.usf.edu/dcf/voicesofyouth/fs.html>

- Why did they move so many times?
- What did they share about how they want to be identified in a family?
- What was characteristic of the homes they felt good about?
- What made adjusting to foster care more difficult?
- What did they need from professionals?
- What did they need from foster parents?
- What will you take with you from the video that will impact your work?

Licensing 1.1.17

**PG: 14-15**

### Video: **Voices of Youth**

<http://centervideo.forest.usf.edu/dcf/voicesofyouth/fs.html>

**Trainer Note:** Prior to showing the video, encourage participants to listen to the message that youth will share regarding their experiences in foster care.

Following the video, engage in a large group discussion.

Ask participants the following questions:

1. **Why did they move so many times?**
2. **What did they share about how they want to be identified in a family?**
3. **What was characteristic of the homes they felt good about?**
4. **What made adjusting to foster care more difficult?**
5. **What did they need from professionals?**
6. **What did they need from foster parents?**
7. **What will you take with you from this video that will impact your work?**

## Activity E: The Big Picture

**Time:** 20 minutes

**Purpose:** To allow participants to connect the reason for out-of-home care with the feelings and behaviors of children. This encourages professionals and parents to see the big picture, instead of seeing the child's behaviors as isolated actions.

**Materials:** • **PG: 16, The Big Picture worksheet**  
Slide: 1.1.18

**Trainer Instructions:** • Ask participants the following question:

***Based on the video we just watched and the information you recall from CORE training, what do you think are the feelings and behavior of children who enter foster care?***

**Participant Instructions:**

1. After watching the video, consider the following:  
***What do you think are the feelings and behaviors of children who enter foster care?***
2. Brainstorm as a large group and record your responses on your worksheet.

### Trainer Version

1. The left column is already filled in based on material presented in CORE training. Read through the reasons before moving to the next step.

Reasons for Referral to Foster Care	Feelings	Behaviors
Physical abuse		
Sexual abuse		
Neglect/Abandonment		
Emotional maltreatment		
Parent in jail		



Parent in hospital		
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2. Focusing on each reason one at a time, ask participants to list some of the emotions or feelings that children might experience when coming into care for each of the referral reasons listed.

- *Instruct participants to list children's corresponding feelings in the middle column on their worksheet.*

Suggested Responses:

Reasons for Referral to Foster Care	Feelings	Behaviors
Physical abuse	Fearful of adults	
Sexual abuse	Stimulated / controlled by others / guilty	
Neglect/Abandonment	Worried about being hungry / rejected	
Emotional maltreatment	Worthless	
Parent in jail	Ashamed	
Parent in hospital	Worried / fearful	

3. Ask participants to describe how children might behave given each reason for referral and corresponding feeling.

- *Explain that children often use actions rather than words to express emotions.*
- *Instruct participants to record behaviors in the right column on their worksheet.*

Suggested Responses:

Reasons for Referral to Foster Care	Feelings	Behaviors
Physical abuse	Fearful of adults	Not get close
Sexual abuse	Stimulated / controlled by others / guilty	Act out sexually
Neglect/ Abandonment	Worried about being hungry / rejected	Hoard food / cry, wet the bed, have

			difficulty eating or sleeping
	Emotional maltreatment	Worthless	Isolate self or become “clingy”
	Parent in jail	Ashamed	Lie about parent
	Parent in hospital	Worried / fearful	Anxious about doctors

**Trainer Note:** *If participants have difficulty describing behaviors clearly or specifically, use questioning to shape their responses.*

*For example, a ten-year-old acting out sexually might mean she is having sexual intercourse with other children or adults, playing sexually with dolls, or touching and feeling other children in a sexual manner.*

**Debrief:**

- Ask participants what conclusions we can draw from the chart.

**Suggested Responses:**

- Maltreated children have behaviors and feelings rooted in their experience.
- They do not act out to agitate or frustrate their caretakers; they act out to express deep-seated emotions.
- ***What does this tell you about the need for foster parent recruitment and relative/non-relative caregiver licensing?***

**Endorse:**

- Need more quality homes
- Need recruitment efforts to identify quality homes
- Need families that can support what children have experienced
- Need homes that will be stable for youth
- Need homes that will love and nurture children

**Activity STOP**

## Collaboration

Slide: 1.1.19



PG: 17-18

Licensing Specialists need to engage with many others to support children, foster parents, and birth families.

These collaborations include: Child Protective Investigators (CPI), Dependency Case Managers (also provide adoption and independent living support services), legal partners including Child Legal Services (CLS) and Guardian ad Litem (GAL), church or faith communities, mental health providers, educational professionals, foster parent preservice trainers, MFC/STFC providers, placement staff, etc.

**Trainer Note:** You are expected to invite each of these speakers to present early in the training, preferably during Module 1. As you schedule them, adjust your modules and timeframes accordingly, ensuring that all curriculum content is presented. Each presenter should be informed that they will have ten minutes to speak to the group.

Inform participants that speakers representing these areas will be speaking to them during the training about their roles and responsibilities. At the end of the speakers' sessions, there will be a small group activity pertaining to the speakers and Licensing Specialist roles.

Adjust the following information if participants received this information during Pre-Service CORE training.

Slide: 1.1.20



PG: 17

### Child Protective Investigator (CPI)

Child Protective Investigators are the first responders on the team. It is their job to determine if a child is in present or impending danger in their home environment and if they should be removed. CPIs try to put any supports that they can into the home to help prevent having to remove a child from their home due to the fact that the removal of a child from their home can be a very traumatic experience. If removal is necessary, the CPI takes the child to a safe place, submits a Shelter Petition to the court, and provides the evidence at a Shelter Hearing or Emergency Shelter Hearing within 24 hours. The CPI conducts a diligent search to find a placement at the home of a relative or close friend (pending background approval). If not, the CPI finds a foster home match. The CPI attends the Arraignment Hearing

and Case Planning Conference. The CPI's case must be closed within 60 days of removal.

The CPI also investigates institutional allegations which include allegations of abuse, abandonment, and neglect against foster parents.

**Trainer Note:** A Child Protective Investigator speaker will come to the class in Module 5 to talk about foster care referrals and their role, what they do, and how working with licensure affects their jobs.

PG: 17

**How does your role as a Licensing Specialist impact a CPI's role and vice-versa?**

**Endorse:**

- The Licensing Specialist provides important information about the foster family during the investigation.
- The CPI provides important information about the child to help transition the child into the home.
- The CPI investigates cases of institutional allegations and the Licensing Specialist supports that effort.

Slide: 1.1.21



PG: 17

### **Case Manager**

The Case Manager's responsibilities are to manage ongoing child Safety Plans and, through ongoing assessment and case planning, to address the diminished caregiver protective capacities that brought the child and family into the Child Welfare System.

In order to achieve the desired programmatic outcomes of child safety, interventions must be well planned and purposeful. These outcomes are achieved through two types of plans:

1. A **Safety Plan**, which is developed whenever it is determined there is present or impending danger
2. A **Case Plan**, which follows the family assessment and sets forth goals and outcomes and describes how the family will work toward these outcomes

The Case Manager may attend hearings and tell the court what kinds of services the child and family needs. The Case Manager prepares most of the reports for the court, including the Judicial Review Report.

***How does your role as a Licensing Specialist impact a Case Manager's role and vice-versa?***

***Endorse:***

- The Licensing Specialist needs the Case Manager to spot what is missing and potential flags on ineligibility for licensure and re-licensure.
- Case Managers have a significant impact on retention of foster parents.
- Case Managers need the Licensing Specialist to support foster parents when placement difficulties arise to stabilize the placement.
- Case Managers need Licensing Specialists to support foster parent's participation in court, appointments, etc. for children in their care.

The Case Plan must provide the most efficient path to quick reunification or permanent placement given the circumstances of the case and the child's need for safe and proper care. If it has been determined that reunification is no longer possible, the permanency plan will be changed to adoption.

- The Adoption and Safe Families Act requires that adoption activities begin when the permanency goal is changed to adoption or a termination of parental rights petition has been filed, whichever occurs first, and established new time lines and conditions for filing a termination of parental rights petition.
- Adoption may be a concurrent or primary goal.

Slide: 1.1.22

**Adoption Specialist**

Adoption Specialists match children in foster care available for adoption with families willing to open their homes and hearts to children needing a "forever family". The Adoption Specialists



PG: 17

who work for these local agencies are experts in helping a child find a forever family and guiding the child and prospective adoptive parents through the adoption process which includes information and support. The Adoption Specialist is responsible for the adoption efforts on behalf of the child. These include:

- Developing Case Plans in the area of adoption, managing and monitoring permanency and provide additional case management services, and facilitating “Preparation for Adoption Discussions” in order for the child to be more willing and able of developing a relationship with the new family
- Completing a psychosocial assessment of the child that provides a comprehensive study of the needs of the child
- Conducting child-specific, targeted, and general recruitment activities for a child
- Conducting an assessment of the prospective adoptive families in the form of an adoptive home studies
- Working to ensure the siblings are placed together whenever possible and their relationship is supported
- Providing documentation to support the child’s eligibility for maintenance adoption subsidy and other benefits
- Utilizing an Adoption Applicant Review Committee for difficult or complex cases
- Providing post-adoption services including education and training, mental health assistance, and supportive assistance

### ***How does your role as a Licensing Specialist impact the Adoption Specialist's role and vice-versa?***

#### ***Endorse:***

- Many foster parents become adoptive parents.
- Well-written documents from the Licensing Specialist provide for a smoother transition from fostering to adoption. The Licensing Specialist's relationship with the foster-adoptive family can build a bridge for the Adoption Specialist.

Slide: 1.1.23



PG: 17

### ***Independent Living Specialist***

Independent Living Specialists are Child Welfare Professionals that exhibit a level of subject matter expertise in the delivery of independent living services. They assist in the coordination of transition services for children in out-of-home care beginning at age 13. They also assist eligible young adults who were formerly in foster care. Services for transitioning young adults are administered through one of three programs: Extended Foster Care, Postsecondary Education Services and Support, and Aftercare Services. Each program has specific eligibility criteria.

- Independent living services may also be referenced as transition services.
- These types of services encompass a range of assistance categories, all geared toward preparing children and young adults for independence. The categories of programs and services to prepare for the transition to a successful adulthood include independent living needs assessment, academic support, post-secondary educational support, career preparation, employment programs or vocational training, budget and financial management, housing education and home management training, health education and risk prevention, family support and healthy marriage education, mentoring and, when young adults are eligible supervised independent living, room and board financial assistance, education financial assistance, and other financial assistance.

***How does your role as a Licensing Specialist impact the Independent Living Specialist's role and vice-versa?***

***Endorse:***

- Independent Living Specialists can assist with targeted recruitment ideas for older youth and young adults participating in Extended Foster Care.
- Independent Living Specialists provide a resource for foster families through trainings, support groups, etc.
- Through open lines of communication, the Independent Living Specialist and the Foster Care Specialist may be able to stabilize teen placements.
- Independent Living Specialists may know foster parents that have skills in relating to older youth.

Slide: 1.1.24



PG: 17

**Children's Legal Services (CLS)**

The Licensing Specialist also needs to work with and assess/collect information from the following legal partners:

- The CLS attorney files the legal paperwork and is responsible for starting the case about the family and child in court. They present all the facts to the court and talk to the court about the best interests of the child.

***How does your role as a Licensing Specialist impact Children's Legal Services (CLS) role and vice-versa?***

***Endorse:***

- Excellent documentation by the Licensing Specialists makes a good impression in court and staffings.
- CLS fosters quality parenting when they ensure that foster parents are noticed of all hearings and legal staffings.
- Licensing Specialists can provide encouragement to foster families to attend court and participate in staffings.



## Slide: 1.1.25



PG: 17

**Guardian ad Litem (GAL)**

A GAL is usually assigned to a child at the time of arraignment, if the court deems one necessary. The GAL works for the child's best interest in court and is an additional resource for the foster parents, biological parents, and the child. However, they do not provide any case management services or transportation.

- Some guardians are more involved than others in talking with the Licensing Specialist. For example, a Guardian ad Litem may report that the parent is never home. The Licensing Specialist would talk with the family to assist in resolving the issue.

***How does your role as a Licensing Specialist impact the Guardian ad Litem's (GAL) role and vice-versa?******Endorse:***

- Because of the GAL's relationship with the child, he/she is a great resource in stabilizing placements.
- GALs that visit children in foster homes have an opportunity to notice and inform the Licensing Specialist of strengths and needs in the foster home.

## Slide: 1.1.26



PG: 18

**Community Partners**

The Licensing Specialist also needs to work with and assess/collect information from the following community members:

- **Healthcare Providers:** Their role is to help determine the physical and mental health of a child and help improve or maintain that health.
- **Health Inspectors:** Health inspections are completed at initial licensure and re-licensure. Homes must pass an inspection by the local health department if a local agreement is intact with the Licensing Specialist's agency to conduct a health inspection. Agencies may also complete their own health inspection if Licensing

Specialists have been trained by DCF, the Department of Health, and other approved designees.

- **Teachers and Daycare Providers:** Teachers are an important part of the team. Teachers can help with identifying behavioral and developmental challenges as well as foster parent involvement.
- **Pastors:** Only if their information is provided by the prospective foster parents as a personal reference at the time of initial licensure.

**Unit Transition:**

Unit 1 provided an opportunity to gain a broad perspective of foster care licensing and the importance of developing and maintaining positive collaborative relationships.

Unit 2 builds on this foundation and provides an in-depth understanding of the laws that govern foster care licensing.

It is important for Licensing Specialists to conduct all professional activities in a manner consistent with best practices and legal directives.

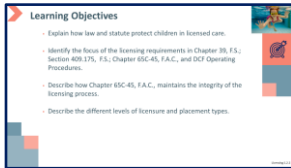
## Unit 1.2: Licensing Laws

### Unit Overview:

Slide: 1.2.1

### Learning Objectives:

Slide: 1.2.2



PG: 19

The purpose of Unit 1.2 is to provide an overview of the licensing laws designed to protect children in licensed care.

1. Explain how law and statute protect children in licensed care.
2. Identify the focus of the licensing requirements in Chapter 39, F.S.; Section 409.175, F.S.; Chapter 65C-45, F.A.C., and DCF Operating Procedures.
3. Describe how Chapter 65C-45, F.A.C. maintains the integrity of the licensing process.
4. Describe the different levels of licensure and placement types.

**Trainer Note:** Discuss that during CORE training, participants were exposed to the general legal hierarchy that governs child welfare so they should all be familiar with Chapter 39. This module seeks to provide a general orientation to the legal requirements and directives of foster care licensing. A more detailed presentation of legal requirements will occur in later modules of this course.

Prior to teaching this section, remember to consult all legal and policy references (including forms) with the most current information posted on the Center for Child Welfare website: <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/>

## Licensing Laws and Policies

Slide: 1.2.3



PG: 20

The laws and statutes that protect children in licensed care include:

- Chapter 39, F.S., pertains to judicial proceedings related to children involved in the dependency system.

The following are specific to licensing and Licensing Specialists should be intimately familiar.

- Section 409.175, F.S., pertains to the state statutory language that governs the licensing of foster homes and child caring agencies.
- Chapter 65C-45, F.A.C., pertains to initial licensure and re-licensure. Contains the licensing minimum requirements. Maintains the integrity of the licensing process.
- Operating Procedures provide a framework for child welfare practices.

## Slide: 1.2.4



PG: 20

PG: 21

## Multi-Ethnic Placement Act/Inter-Ethnic Placement Provision (MEPA)

- Prohibits the delay or denial of any adoption or placement in foster care due to the race, color, or national origin of the child or of the foster or adoptive parents.
- Requires states to provide for diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom homes are needed.
- Violations of MEPA could result in a loss of 2% to 5% of the state's Title IV-E funds. 42 U.S.C. § 671(b); 45 C.F.R. § 1355.38(f).

## s. 409.175, F.S., Licensure of family foster homes, residential child-caring agencies, and child-placing agencies; public records exemption.

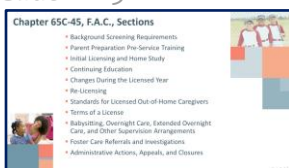
This section of the law provides guidance on how to protect the health, safety, and well-being of all children in the state who are cared for by family foster homes, residential child-caring agencies, and child-placing agencies. This section identifies the licensing requirements for such homes and agencies, and it provides procedures to determine if the requirements are being met.

## Chapter 65C-45, F.A.C., Sections

Chapter 65C-45, F.A.C., provides the most detailed guidance regarding licensing requirements and is most frequently used by Licensing Specialists. The sections in this Chapter are:

- Background Screening Requirements
- Parent Preparation Pre-Service Training
- Initial Licensing and Home Study
- Continuing Education
- Changes During the Licensed Year
- Re-Licensing
- Standards for Licensed Out-of-Home Caregivers
- Terms of a License

## Slide: 1.2.5

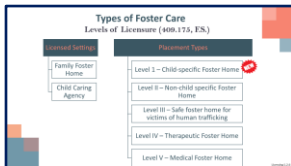


PG: 21

- Babysitting, Overnight Care, Extended Overnight Care, and Other Supervision Arrangements
- Foster Care Referrals and Investigations
- Administrative Actions, Appeals, and Closures

## Levels of Licensure

Slide: 1.2.6



PG: 22

The Department, in conjunction with the Florida Coalition for Children (FCC), implemented the statewide Path Forward initiative. The Path Forward initiative includes the following statewide programs to expand the Department's Title IV-E footprint and draw down additional federal funding.

- Title IV-E Extended Foster Care (EFC) and Extended Maintenance Adoption Subsidy (EMAS)
- Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP) and Extended Guardianship Assistance Program (EGAP)
- Title IV-E Eligibility clean-up
- Candidacy

In addition, the Department sought ways to provide and enhance benefits for the relative/non-relative population. By restructuring the types of foster care licenses, it was able to implement what is called "levels" of licensure.

The levels of licensure are classifications of the foster homes licensed by DCF. The levels include:

- Level I – Child-Specific Foster Home for relative, non-relative, and fictive kin
- Level II – Non-Child Specific Foster Home which is currently traditional foster homes
- Level III – Safe Foster Home for human trafficking victims
- Level IV – Therapeutic Foster Homes
- Level V – Medical Foster Homes for medical conditions

**Unit Transition:**

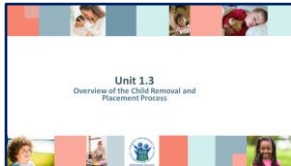
For purposes of this training, Module 2 will focus on Level II and Module 3 will focus solely on Level 1, for the relative, non-relative, and fictive kin.

Having a broad understanding of the focus of laws and policies that impact licensing sets the stage for obtaining more detailed knowledge about the specific requirements that are part of licensing and maintaining foster homes.

## Unit 1.3: Overview of the Child Removal and Placement Process

### Unit Overview:

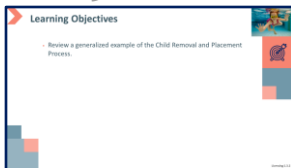
Slide: 1.3.1



This unit is a high-level overview of the child removal and placement process to provide a visual framework for the course.

### Learning Objectives:

Slide: 1.3.2

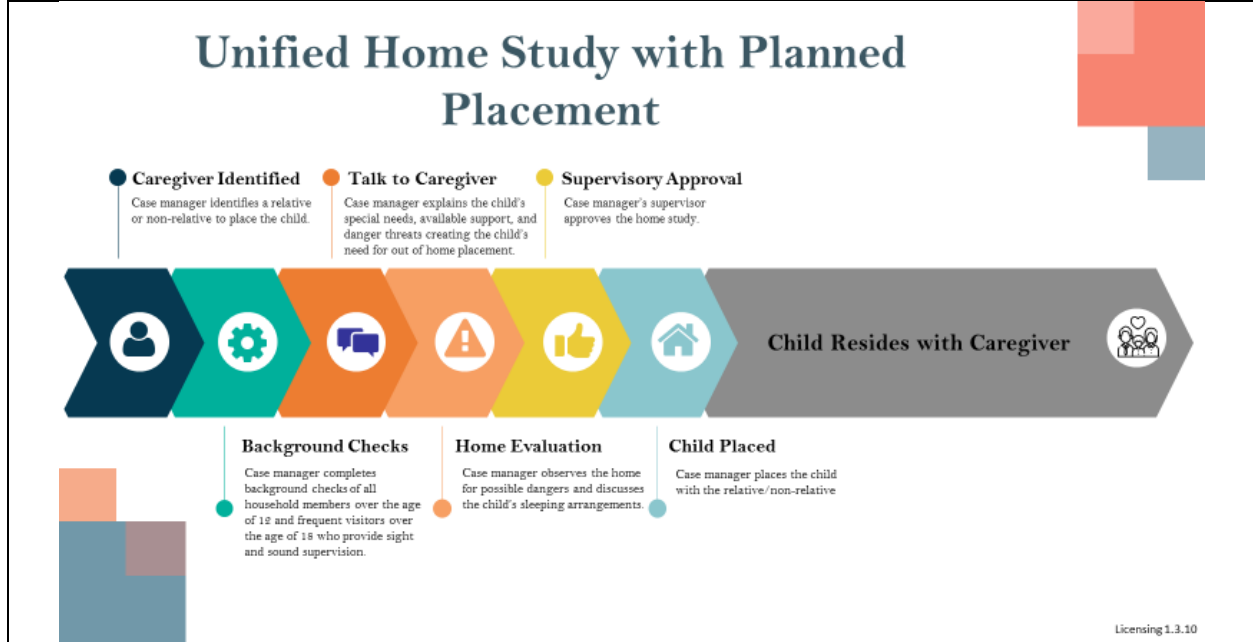


1. Review a generalized example of the Child Removal and Placement Process.

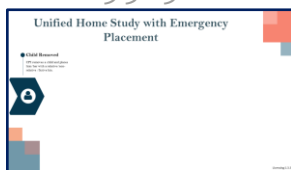
PG: 23



**Trainer Note:** Explain to participants that the following example is a tool to provide a generalized visual of the process. The exact steps in the process may not be the same for each level of licensure or in the same exact order for every organization.



Slides: 1.3.3-1.3.10



PG: 24

## Scenario – Overview of the Process

This scenario will apply to Levels of Licensure 2 through 5. Level 1 will be discussed in Module 3.

The process initially begins with the agency finding safe homes for placing children. This includes processing applications, conducting background checks, training, and placement visits to ensure that the homes and the potential foster parents are suitable.

When a child is in need of placement and a relative or non-relative is unavailable, the Child Welfare Professional contacts the placement staff at the CBC Lead Agency where they will review their approved licensed caregivers.

Based on the needs of the child, contact will be made with licensed caregiver(s) to discuss the child's needs and possibility of placement. Some of the questions that are considered, include:

- *What are the circumstances that caused the CPI to remove the child from his/her house and place with the relative/non-relative?*
- *Does the child have any special needs?*
- *If any, what are the danger threats that the caregiver should be aware of?*

The Child Welfare Professional also explains the caregiver's rights and responsibilities, and the support and resources that are available.

When the placement is accepted, the child is placed with the licensed caregiver.

**Unit Transition:**

The next unit will focus on the skills needed to become an effective Foster Care Licensing Specialist/Counselor.

Licensing requires that in addition to gathering and documenting information, professionals understand how to assess and analyze the information to make good decisions.

Licensing Specialists must become experts in assessment, so the material provided in CORE Pre-Service training coupled with the next unit, will ensure that Licensing Specialists have the knowledge and tools to be successful.

## Unit 1.4: The Roles and Skills of the Licensing Specialist

### Unit Overview:

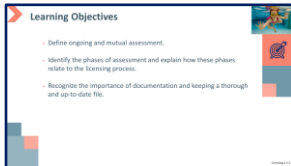
Slide: 1.4.1



The purpose of Unit 1.4 is to explain how assessment is an ongoing and mutual process that is fully woven within the fabric of a Licensing Specialist's job.

### Learning Objectives:

Slide: 1.4.2



1. Define ongoing and mutual assessment.
2. Identify the phases of assessment and explain how these phases relate to the licensing process.
3. Recognize the importance of documentation and keeping a thorough and up-to-date file.

PG: 26

## Assessment and the Licensing Specialist

Slide: 1.4.3



PG: 27

A Licensing Specialist has the important role of identifying caregivers who can manage the special challenges of fostering and placing children with the best-matched family. This great responsibility requires far more than a checklist; it requires insight, relationship-building, and hard work to identify and continue to build great foster parents.

- Licensing Specialists need to understand the importance of and develop skills in assessment so that they have a complete picture of a foster parent's strengths and needs that will enable him/her to successfully help a child reach the outcomes of safety, permanency, and well-being.

Slide: 1.4.4



PG: 27

- Assessment is a mutual and ongoing process between the agency and family. Assessment, from the agency perspective, is directly linked to outcomes for children.
- The Licensing Specialist needs to look at assessment from the point of view of a child and to look at assessment in terms of:
  - Why foster parents want to foster
  - Why agencies need foster parents
  - What children in care need and deserve
- Assessment is mutual because the agency and family must both know and learn about one another to see if the family fits the system:
  - If the fostering role will work for the family (in their view)
  - If the agency believes that the family can meet the system-specific needs
- Assessment is ongoing because of change. For example, a family may become more or less prepared to foster a broader range of behaviors based on trainings they have

received and capacity of children over time. Also, foster families experience changes just like other families and these changes need to be assessed in terms of how they impact the family's capacity to provide quality parenting.

***In general, what does the agency need to know about the family?***

***Endorse:***

- Family capacity to provide quality parenting
- Family capacity to ensure child safety
- Family motivation to foster
- Family capacity (emotional, physical, and financial) to care for children

***If you were to ask a child, what would he/she ask you to look at?***

***Endorse:***

- Being part of a family
- Safety
- Being normal like the other kids
- Someone they can count on
- Someone they can trust
- Being accepted for who they are
- Love

***Let's go a little deeper. What must a foster parent need to be willing to do?***

***Endorse:***

- Understanding and preparedness to meet the individual child needs and to manage the special needs and circumstances created by trauma
- Willingness and ability to persevere when fostering is tough
- Willingness and ability to challenge one's own values and views
- Willingness and ability to embrace the child's existing support system (extended family/co-parenting)

- Willingness and ability to engage in shared parenting and family mentoring
- Willingness to work towards reunification and permanency for the child
- Willing to work as a professional partner in the larger team

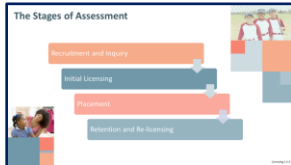
***What does the foster parent need to know about the Licensing Specialist and the agency?***

***Endorse:***

- Your responsibilities
  - Supports they will receive
  - The impact they can have
  - Types of children in the system of care
  - That they are not going to be in this alone
  - Resources available
- 
- Assessment includes tasks that Licensing Specialists must take to ensure that required foster parent training, home studies, inspections, and evaluations are conducted and applied to licensing determinations. Licensing Specialists are expected to:
    - ensure potential foster parents actively and effectively participate in required training.
    - determine the appropriateness of individuals to serve as foster parents.
    - verify the safety and suitability of the foster home/physical environment.

**Trainer Note:** Review the four Stages of the Licensing Placement Assessment which will guide the remaining modules of this course.

Slide: 1.4.5



PG: 28

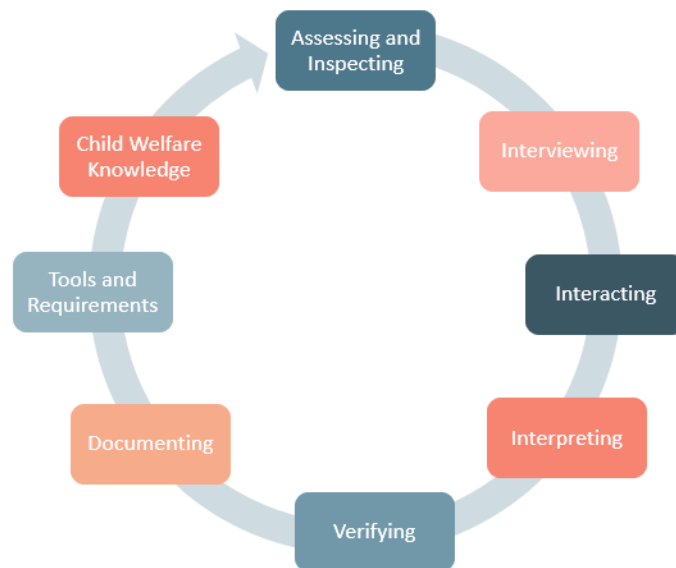
## Stages of Licensing Assessment

- There are four main stages of licensing assessment which include:
  1. **Recruitment and Inquiry:** This stage includes initial contact, pre-screening, initial documentation, orientation, and agency selection.
  2. **Initial Licensing:** This stage includes all activities after pre-licensing until the time that initial licensing is awarded or denied. It includes pre-service training, written profiles, face-to-face interviews, prospective parent observations, references, and the Unified Home Study (UHS).
  3. **Placement:** This stage includes all activities involved in the actual placement of the child.
  4. **Retention and Re-licensing:** This stage includes all activities following the award of a license and placement of the child. It includes home visits, assessment of strengths and needs, ongoing support/training/mentoring, and the relicensing checklist in FSFN.

## The Skills and Knowledge of Assessment

It is the responsibility of the Licensing Specialist to gather and interpret the results of assessments and communicate findings to appropriate parties to ensure qualified and competent individuals serve as foster parents to children in care.

Slide: 1.4.6



**PG: 29-30**

Skills and knowledge to be able to perform these duties include:

- Assessing and Inspecting:
  - Capture through the completion of a home study
  - Conduct and document a thorough and complete home inspection
- Interviewing:
  - Interviewing strategies
  - Individual and group interviews
- Interacting:
  - Interpersonal communication skills
  - Engagement
  - Cultural competence
  - Verbal and non-verbal communication skills
  - Effective working relationships
  - Review assessment findings with individual subjects/families



- Interpreting:
  - Initial assessment of an applicant’s suitability to serve as a foster parent
  - Formal and informal assessments to determine suitability to participate in foster parent training
  - Review and assess pre-screening application to serve as a foster/adoptive parent
  - Assess documentation and information to make an informed recommendation approving or denying an applicant’s licensure as a foster parent
  - Determine motivation of applicant to serve as a foster/adoptive parent
  - Recognize indicators of domestic violence, adult and adolescent substance abuse, and adult and adolescent mental health issues
  - Background screening results
  - Information and findings in written documents
  - Information gathered from personal observations collateral contacts and interviews with the foster parent, household members, employers, and others that may provide critical information needed for assessment purposes
- Verifying:
  - Information and observations gathered during pre-screening activities
  - Information and observations gathered during assessments
  - Techniques to verify the validity and reliability of information and evidence
- Documenting:
  - Unified Home Study
  - Prepare licensing documentation for appropriate signatures
  - Input all rule-required information in SACWIS known as Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN)
  - Issue a license and maintain a copy
- Tools:
  - Family profiles
  - Pre-screening assessment instruments/mandatory rule required forms
  - Formal licensing assessment instruments and protocols
  - Unified Home Study template requirements:
    - Background screening requirements
    - Pre-service training requirements
    - Home inspection criteria and standards
    - Required elements in the Unified Home Study (i.e., Motivation, Family History, Physical Environment, etc.)
    - Upload of required documents, such as copies of driver’s licenses, auto insurance, proof of income, medical forms, etc.

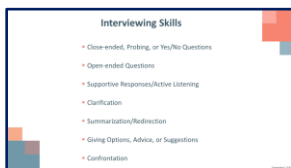
- Recommendation to issue or deny the license
- Child Welfare General Knowledge:
  - Characteristics of children in care
  - Statutory definitions of abuse, neglect, and abandonment
  - Expectations of foster/adoptive parents as outlined in the Partnership Plan

## Interpersonal Skills

**Trainer Note:** In order to effectively assess potential and current foster parents, you will need to use a variety of interpersonal skills including engagement, cultural competence, verbal/non-verbal behaviors, and establishing working relationships.

The CORE Pre-Service training provided extensive material on interviewing and interpersonal skills.

Slide: 1.4.7-1.4.8



PG: 31

**How do the interpersonal and interviewing skills addressed in CORE Pre-Service training pertain specifically to Licensing Specialists?**

**Endorse:**

- **Closed-ended, Probing, or Yes/No Questions:** Allows the Licensing Specialist to gather specific information from applicants/foster parents.  
Example: “What is your birth date?”
- **Open-ended Questions:** Allows the Licensing Specialist to gather specific information from applicants/foster parents.  
Example: “Tell me about your childhood.”
- **Supportive Responses/Active Listening:** Builds trust between the Licensing Specialist and the applicants/foster parents; encourages applicants/foster parents to be honest in the interview.  
Example: “It sounds like you have thought of fostering for a long time.”
- **Clarification:** Used to maintain focus and organization during interview; assists the Licensing Specialist in

moving the interview along and using limited time efficiently.

Example: *“You believe that you have a good marriage. What does good mean to you?”*

- **Summarization/Redirection:** Used to maintain focus and organization during interview; assists the Licensing Specialist in moving the interview along and using limited time efficiently.

Examples: *“Now that you’ve talked about your childhood, tell me about your life as a married person”* (redirection) and *“You’ve told me three things that you consider your strengths: your parenting experience, high energy level, and positive relationship with the school system”* (summarization).

- **Giving Options, Advice, or Suggestions:** Allows the Licensing Specialist to serve in a supportive role to applicants/foster parents.

Example: *“I can see that you have your heart set on fostering a newborn. Perhaps you can begin to think about the possibility of older children.”*

- **Confrontation:** Necessary when the Licensing Specialist feels that the applicant/foster parent has been resistant or has not been completely honest in responses.

Example: *“It feels like you are not giving me all the details about the overnight guests in your home.”*

**Trainer Note:** Use the following slide after gathering input from participants.

Although engagement was discussed in detail during CORE Pre-Service training, we will address it again because it is so foundational to every other skill the Licensing Specialist will need to master.

Slide: 1.4.9



PG: 32

## Engagement

Engagement is the process of putting the family at ease, drawing its members more comfortably in the process, and building trust and rapport.

**What are some strategies you can employ to successfully engage potential foster parents?**

### Endorse:

- Respect the family's culture.
- Determine how the applicants prefer to be addressed.
- Determine where the family feels most comfortable in holding interviews.
- Ask open-ended questions that are general in nature to allow the applicants an opportunity to express themselves.
- Display a non-judgmental attitude.
- Vary the intensity of the interview so that there is a balance between more probing, personal questions and more superficial ones.
- Seek opportunities to compliment the family about their children, home, activities, etc.
- Acknowledge the family pets.
- Be sure to answer the family's questions and address their concerns during each contact.

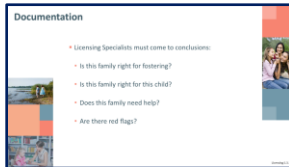
## Activity F: Engagement Skills Practice

<b>Time:</b>	30 minutes
<b>Purpose:</b>	To allow participants the opportunity to practice using engagement skills with foster parents.
<b>Materials:</b> <i>Slide: 1.4.10</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>PG: 33, Engagement Skills Practice worksheet</b></li> </ul>
<b>Trainer Instructions:</b>	<p>Remind participants that the Interviewing Skills Engagement Continuum was provided in CORE Pre-Service training, Lab 2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using the Phases of an Interview and the strategies to successfully engage foster parents we just brainstormed, form pairs to complete the activity.</li> <li>• Each person will conduct the role play as a Licensing Specialist interviewing a foster parent.</li> <li>• Practice introducing yourself and establishing a positive relationship with a foster parent.</li> <li>• Each person will have five minutes to complete the introductory interview as outlined below:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. State your name and position.</li> <li>b. Create an introductory sentence.</li> <li>c. Describe your role.</li> <li>d. Share your motivation to be a Licensing Specialist.</li> <li>e. Find out the foster parent's name.</li> <li>f. Find out how long he/she has been fostering.</li> <li>g. Discover his/her motivation to foster.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• After concluding the interview, the interviewee will provide feedback to the interviewer focused on how well they utilized engagement skills.</li> </ul> <p><b>Debrief:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have participants volunteer specific statements, questions, and non-verbal behaviors that created positive engagement.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Participant Instructions:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Discuss how important first impressions are when meeting foster parents.</i></li> <li>• <i>Identify anything participants found to be difficult.</i></li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct a role-play as a Licensing Specialist interviewing a foster parent.</li> <li>2. Practice introducing yourself and establishing a positive relationship with a foster parent.</li> <li>3. Each person will have five minutes to complete the introductory interview as outlined below:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. State your name and position.</li> <li>b. Create an introductory sentence.</li> <li>c. Describe your role.</li> <li>d. Share your motivation to be a licensing specialist.</li> <li>e. Find out the foster parent's name.</li> <li>f. Find out how long they have been fostering.</li> <li>g. Discover their motivation to foster.</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. After concluding the interview, the interviewee will provide feedback to the interviewer focused on how well they utilized engagement skills.</li> <li>5. Engage in large group debrief.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Activity STOP</b></p>	

## Documentation

Slide: 1.4.11



PG: 34

Licensing Specialists ask many questions, observe interactions, and collect data, background checks documents, and profiles. Throughout, Licensing Specialists need to analyze this information for deeper meaning to assess motivation, skills, support systems, attitudes, and so much more.

- Licensing Specialists must come to conclusions:
  - Is this family right for fostering?
  - Is this family right for this child?
  - Does this family need help?
  - Are there red flags?
- A Licensing Specialist may find through the process that they have not gathered sufficient information and must conduct further interviews and observations.
- It is important to note that narratives in the home study reflect interpretations of what is observed and heard. A careful review of all work is critical. Words do matter and when writing a narrative with conclusions, accurate documentation represents the professional, agency, child, and family well.
- Documentation can be one of the most helpful, yet one of the most limiting aspects of assessment.
- Consider that time and expertise has gone into developing forms and systems that allow for a thorough and systematic approach to assessment based on best practices and policy.
- It can be limiting if forms are viewed as checklists and Licensing Specialists do not reach a deeper level of assessment.
- All of the skills needed will grow with experience and dedication to do excellent work.

Slide: 1.4.12



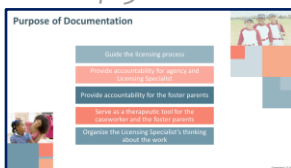
PG: 34

- When gathering information during the assessment process, it is important to check facts. Sometimes there is a discrepancy between the information provided and the information obtained during the verification process.
- Techniques to verify the validity and reliability of information and evidence include:
  - Check with references
  - Check with employers
  - Ask follow-up questions
  - Compare answers
  - Conduct background checks

## Purpose of Documentation

Documentation provides accountability for both the activities and the results of the work with a foster family. The purpose of documentation is to:

Slide: 1.4.13



PG: 35

- **Guide the licensing process:** Documentation provides an ongoing “picture” of the nature of involvement with families, the progress of mutual assessment, support and development, and ensures regulatory requirements are met.
- **Provide accountability for the agency and the Licensing Specialist:** Records should describe who is served, the kinds of services provided, the basis for all decisions, the degree to which policies and procedures are implemented, and other aspects of accountability and quality control. This legal record provides a statement about the quality of the Licensing Specialist’s work that may decrease personal liability should legal action be taken against the agency or a Child Welfare Professional.
- **Provide accountability for the foster parents:** The licensing documentation not only sets regulatory requirements for foster families to follow, it also helps them to fully participate in the mutual assessment process.



- **Serve as a therapeutic tool for the Child Welfare Professional and the foster parents:** Case records and other assessment opportunities can demonstrate the way in which the Licensing Specialist and family collaborate to mutually assess and define support and developmental goals and serve to evaluate the progress toward them.
- **Organize the Licensing Specialist's thinking about the work:** Structured presentation of factual information leads to more in-depth assessment, support, and development planning. Poor recording and disorganized thinking go hand-in-hand and likely leads to poor service delivery to clients.

## Quality Record-Keeping

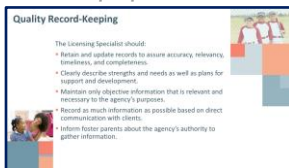
The foster parent's records contain professional and legal documents. As such, they should be completed in a timely and professional manner and confidentiality should be respected at all times. This means that appropriate controls should be in place to ensure the security of paper and automated files.

Quality record-keeping is an integral part of licensing. The case record is used as an opportunity to organize thinking and to integrate all of the information gathered. It is important to remember that all documentation should be uploaded into FSFN. FSFN is the record keeping system for all documentation.

The Licensing Specialist should:

- Retain and update records in FSFN to assure accuracy, relevancy, timeliness, and completeness.
- Clearly describe strengths and needs as well as plans for support and development. Development goals should be stated in specific behavioral terms. The goal statements should be measurable, achievable, understandable, and verifiable.
- Maintain only objective information that is relevant and necessary to the agency's purposes. Facts should be

Slide: 1.4.14



PG: 36

recorded and distinguished from opinions. When opinions are offered, their basis should be documented.

- Record as much information as possible based on direct communication.
- Inform foster parents about the agency's authority to gather information, the principal purpose for the use of the information that they provide, the nature and extent of the confidentiality of the information, and under what circumstances information in records may be shared with others.

## Traditional Licensing File

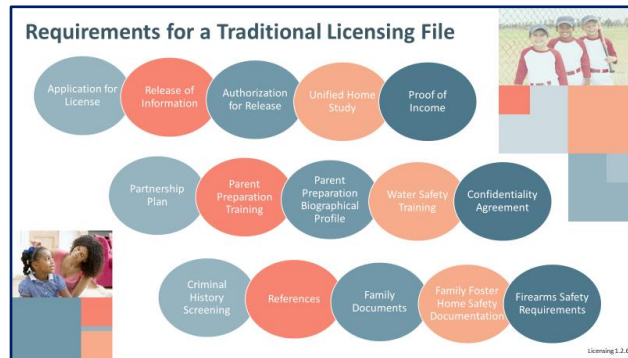
Slide: 1.4.15



**Trainer Note:** This section is intended to provide a brief overview of the traditional licensing application file. Each component will be addressed in later modules so keep your review of this section brief. Remind participants that all documentation must be loaded into FSFN.

Refer participants to **PG: 37-38** as you review this section.

Slide: 1.4.16



PG: 37-38

### Traditional Licensing File Chapter 65C-45, F.A.C.

A traditional licensing application file shall consist of the following documentation (Note: Some of the requirements listed below may be waivable for Level 1):

1. Application for License to Provide Out-of-Home Care for Dependent Children
2. Release of Information
3. Authorization for Release of Health and Medical Information for Prospective Foster or Adoptive Parents
4. Licensing Unified Home Study
5. Proof of Income
6. A Partnership Plan for Children in Out-of-Home Care
7. Parent Preparation Pre-service training certificate
8. Parent Preparation Pre-Service biographical profile which shall be the demographic and narrative portions of the Unified Home Study as completed by the applicant(s)
9. Documentation of water safety training, if applicable
10. Confidentiality Agreement for Foster Parent Application
11. Verification of criminal history screening for applicant and household members including:
  - a. Affidavit of Good Moral Character
  - b. Local law enforcement check
  - c. Civil court records check
  - d. Florida Department of Law Enforcement records check
  - e. Federal Bureau of Investigation clearance letter
  - f. Abuse history background check through the Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN)
  - g. Requests for abuse and neglect histories and Civil court records from any other state in which the applicant or any other adult household member has resided during the past five (5) years

## 12. References, including:

- a. Three (3) personal references who are not related to the applicant(s) and who have known the applicant(s) for at least two (2) years
- b. A current employment verification for each applicant
- c. References from the adult children of each applicant
- d. References from school personnel of each school age child residing in the home
- e. References from the child care provider of any preschool age child residing in the home who is enrolled in a child care program
- f. References and documentation regarding any previous licensure as out-of-home caregivers

## 13. Family Documents:

- a. Driver's license(s) and driving records for any household members or other persons identified who may transport children
- b. Proof of vehicle insurance

## 14. Family Foster Home Safety Documentation:

- a. Satisfactory home environmental health inspection report, in the areas of water supply, food holding temperature, plumbing, pest control, sewage, and garbage disposal
- b. Radon testing results, when required
- c. Fire inspection report (where required by local zoning laws)
- d. Floor plan
- e. Evacuation and disaster preparedness plans

## 15. The Acknowledgement of Firearms Safety Requirements form

***How will this information be obtained?******Endorse:***

- Unified Home Study
- Background screening
- Observations
- Interviews
- Gathering documents
- Completing required forms

The requirements and process for obtaining and documenting the information needed will be covered in detail during the upcoming course modules.

***What are some of the challenges to maintaining documentation?******Endorse:***

- Too much documentation
- Not enough time to finish all the documentation
- Documentation gets in the way of doing the real work of child welfare
- Don't understand the system and technology

***What are some complaints we often hear about the resulting documentation?******Endorse:***

- Lack of information
- Opinion not fact
- Lack of clarity
- Not completed
- Not submitted in a timely fashion

***What are some strategies for overcoming these challenges and complaints?******Endorse:***

- Complete documentation immediately.
- Ensure that all documentation is accurate and consistent.
- Documentation should tell a story; each piece should be integrated so that people reading it are able to see the complete picture.
- If there are questions that arise after reading the documentation, continue to gather information that fills in those gaps.

## Navigating Potential Roadblocks

Slide: 1.4.17



PG: 38

***Given all your roles and responsibilities and strict timelines, Licensing Specialists commonly experience the challenge of time management when some requirements are not met or there are additional steps to take for a requirement to be met.***

***During which phases do you think these challenges might occur? What are some potential roadblocks to completing the licensure process in a timely manner?***

***Endorse:***

- Unanticipated data (e.g., disqualifying offenses or unknown disposition of a criminal case)
- Difficulty submitting supportive documentation (e.g., proof of income)
- Health inspection, water sample, and/or radon test results that are pending
- Pending documentation requested for criminal history

***How do you think you can resolve common roadblocks?***

***Endorse:***

- Begin to gather necessary information early in the process
- Support foster parents
- Ensure timeliness in completing follow-up activities
- Communicate with all partners and referral sources
- Manage files (storage, copies) properly and in an organized fashion
- Attend staffings
- Engage in peer reviews

**Key Points:*****What is the goal of foster care licensing?***

The goal of foster home licensure is to ensure the physical and emotional safety and overall well-being of children who have been removed from their families and must be cared for by people with whom they have relative or no familial connection.

***Name the four main stages of licensing assessment?***

1. **Recruitment and Inquiry:** This stage includes initial contact, pre-screening, initial documentation, orientation, and agency selection.
2. **Initial Licensing:** This stage includes all activities after pre-licensing until the time that initial licensing is awarded or denied. It includes pre-service training, written profiles, face-to-face interviews, prospective parent observations, references, and the Unified Home Study (UHS).
3. **Placement:** This stage includes all activities involved in the actual placement of the child.
4. **Retention, and Re-Licensing:** This stage includes all activities following the award of a license and placement of the child. It includes home visits, assessment of strengths and needs, ongoing support/training/mentoring, and the relicensing checklist in FSFN.

**Module Transition:**

The next module covers the important roles foster parents play and the qualities needed to care for children in licensed care.

It will also address the behaviors and needs of children in care, so Licensing Specialists and partners can engage in effective recruitment, influence best placement decisions, and serve the best interests of children.